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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

JANUARY 17-19, 2004

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 17-19, 2004. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

#### CULTURE

2. Vakit / Malatya AK Party Deputy Fuat Olmeztoprak announced that a training center will open in Malatya. The training center will provide workshops and contain computer and

language labs.

#### ECONOMIC

3. Milliyet / 2003 trade volume at the Mersin Free Zone increased 68% compared to 2002 and reached USD 2.7 billion.

4. Cumhuriyet / The Syrian Government relaxed the visa process for Turkish business travelers to Syria. Travelers registered with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Turkey will be able to get their Syrian visas at the border, as promised by President Asad during his visit to Turkey.

5. Ozgur Gundem / Batman merchants are concerned because 630 Turkish Petroleum (TPAO) temporary workers' job contracts are not yet renewed. Merchants Chamber General Secretary Suleyman Gunes indicated that the chamber supports its members. If the problem is not solved, workers are planning to go to Ankara with their family members to protest.

6. Cumhuriyet / In the Southeast, unemployment figures reached up to 50% in many cities in the region. Population also increased almost 25% since 1990 census.

7. Turkiye / In Gaziantep, incumbent mayor Celal Dogan was nominated by CHP as their candidate.

8. Bolge / Five hundred and fifty-five AK Party representatives met to nominate names for Adana City, Seyhan and Yuregir districts and the 13 districts of Adana province. There were seven nominees for Adana city and 18 nominees each for the districts of Seyhan and Yuregir, with 82 nominees for the other 13 districts of Adana. Results will be sent to the AK Party head office in Ankara.

9. Ozgur Gundem / In Adana, there was a political demonstration calling on the Turkish government to free the DEHAP deputies and Abdullah Ocalan. There were about 300 people at the demonstration.

REID